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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. H. P., Junction City, Kansas.—The common Columbine with full, double, regular flowers destitute of spurs, *i. e.*, with the petals multiplied and transformed into sepals, is a well-known old plant, not very rare in gardens. But flowers with only five petals and those spurless are unknown to us.

A. H. Y., Hanover, Indiana.—As to new Trillium, considering what vagaries the species sometimes show, it will be in good time to consider the one referred to when any specimen of it is known to be extant, and when we have seen it.

C. G. A., Augusta, Maine.—Your plants are, 1, *Corinia Conradii*; 2, *Geranium dissectum*; 3, *Myonotis palustris*; 4, *Empetrum nigrum*; 5, *Vaccinium Vitis Idææ*.

R. C., Cincinnati.—There is as yet no work that comes up to what you want, but we have now in press a work by Dr. Coates that is intended to supply just such wants as yours. It will be a perfect text book of Ornithology and in addition will contain a synopsis of all known birds of North America, and an artificial key, by means of which any species of North American birds can be readily identified without previous knowledge of ornithology being necessary. The book will be illustrated with several hundred cuts and several plates.

V. B. L. New York.—Your lichens are—1, *Cladonia deginierans*; 2, *Parmelia tartarea* Var. *frigida*; 3, *Sphæria convergens*; 4, *Lecidea disciformis*; 5, *Lecanora cinnabarina*; 6, *Cenangium plicatum*; 7, *Lecanactis* sp.; 8, *Lecidea exigua*, and *Lecidea cerina* on the same piece of bark; 9, *Parmelia crinita*.—J. L. R.

"In the NATURALIST for August, 1870, in the article upon 'Flowerless Plants,' the writer speaks of a species of Clathrus. Can you give me any more of a description of it? For two years, at long intervals, we have had a fungus in a bank at the front of our house, which I think must be this Clathrus. We do not perceive it until the nauseous odor appraises us of its existence. Then we dig it up and burn it; and, following some one's advice, I know not whose, salt the hole from which we dug it. The writer of the article referred to, says it is 'a putrid, revolting, jelly-like mass of raw flesh, just beneath the loosely-lifted soil.' The one I speak of seems to come above the soil, about two inches before this jelly-like mass appears. Please tell me something about it, if you can, and if there is anything we can do to prevent its recurrence. Perhaps some other reader of the NATURALIST would like to know about it, and you would prefer to answer through its pages."—E. M. B.

We have referred the matter to a well-known botanist, who sends the following reply:

"If the fungus to which you refer be a Clathrus, it begins its growth as a rounded, fleshy cell, which at maturity bursts and discloses a mass of soft, red matter, having a net-like form, with a nauseous odor. This fleshy mass emits an inconceivable quantity of spores, as the generative dust of fungi is termed. It is utterly impossible to eradicate the plant from any spot where it has once distributed its fruit, for the reason that out of these million of reproductive germs, some must inevitably escape any destructive agency. I have known single fungi to appear in places never before detected, and then disappear for years. These spores are so minute that they float in the air like dust, are borne on the percolating water beneath the soil, and are spread abroad by so many natural conveyances that their destruction is impossible. They do not always reappear. Years may pass without their recurrence, and then suddenly, owing to atmospheric influences, these spores, lying perdu in the earth, will germinate luxuriantly.

There are figures of species of Clathrus in many mycological works. Some of them must be very handsome. Should your plant reappear, I would suggest that you should carefully take it up and preserve it in alcohol. By sending it to the NATURALIST the identity could be established.

I should try a dose of carbolic acid, which is not expensive, and could be freely watered over the spot where the fungus appears. Dilute sulphuric acid would prevent the germination of those spores which it touched.—C. J. S.

We also append an account of the European Clathrus from Cooke's "Plain and Easy Account of British Fungi." The second family of fungi is termed Gasteromycetes (*gastes* Gr., a stomach; *mukes*, a mushroom) which have the hymenium or spore bearing surface, enclosed within a covering called a peridium (from *perideo*, Gr. I wrap round) so that all the spores are produced and ripened within a kind of stomach or *gastes*.—Every one knows the puff-ball, a spherical pouch, containing, when ripe, an almost impalpable brownish dust, not unlike Scotch snuff, and which mischievous school boys delight in puffing in each other's faces. The pouch is the peridium or stomach, and the brown dust the innumerable ripened spores.

Certain fungi having this structure are subterranean in habit; in them the hymenium does not become dusty, but remains permanent; nor does it melt away as in other groups, except when it becomes decayed. One of the most striking in appearance, disgusting in odor, and noxious in properties of all fungi, is the Laticed Stinkhorn (*Clathrus cancellatus*) which is, however, so rare as scarcely to merit a notice here except to call attention to its most commendable feature, that of the beauty and singularity of its form. The receptacle resembles a spherical net work or lattice work of coral, but is of so putrescent a nature that its odor materially detracts from its beauty; M. Roques relates of its properties that a young person having eaten a morsel was seized with violent convulsions, lost the use of her speech, and ultimately fell into a stupor which lasted forty-eight hours: prompt attention was given to her, but it appears to have been some months before she was perfectly cured.